

Meeting Minutes
Delaware Population Consortium
June 12, 2005
10:00 a.m.
Kent County Administration Building
Dover, DE

In Attendance:

Kelly Crumpley – Kent Co.	Ed Ratledge – University of Delaware
Derrick Lightfoot, AICP – City of Wilmington	Don Berry – Dept. of Education
Jennifer Leister – New Castle Co.	Dan Blevins – WILMAPCO
Mike Mahaffie – State Planning Coordination	Mark Glaze – DelDOT
Rick Kautz – Sussex Co.	Dawn Melson – City of Dover

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:15 a.m.

Review and approval of 6/7/05 meeting minutes

Ed Ratledge moved approval of the minutes of the June 7, 2005 meeting minutes. Jennifer Leister seconded the motion. The motion carried, unanimously.

Review and discussion of work on the 2005 DPC projections

Ed Ratledge handed out a series of draft projection control totals for discussion. He noted that the projected state total for 2030 has been raised slightly (about 2,000 persons). He added that this is within the margin of error of the projections series and does not represent a major change.

Ed explained that he has had to adjust births up and deaths down by small margins, based on the latest data. This will slightly affect parts of the state by slowing the trend of decline in natural increase that we have seen. He added that there is not likely to be another “birth bulge,” such as those associated with the Baby Boom, and births to Baby Boomers.

Ed explained that net migration numbers were up early in the study period, but tend to drift downwards in the long-term. He pointed to the effects of the retirement population and the service employment population in Sussex County.

This version of the control totals reflects the latest vital statistics data from the state. Ed explained that there was a slight increase in births in Sussex county and slight slowing in deaths in the latest data.

In Kent County, he pointed out a “tactical decision” to make slight changes to migration assumptions and let migration increase slightly faster than in previous versions of the projections. He said he plans to reflect the recent increase in in-migration to Kent County and see if that trend holds over the next several years.

In Sussex County, he said, he has dropped the long-term total slightly. He explained that migration is down slightly and has been decreasing by a small amount in recent years. He has, therefore, leveled migration projections in the current version of the projections.

He added that natural increase will clearly become negative, as births fall behind deaths, in the out years. This is in spite of a recent increase in births, largely due to the immigrant population and the increase in younger workers coming to Sussex County to provide services for retirees.

In New Castle County, there has been another slight decrease in the long-term projection. This reflects out-migration; which may be headed to Kent County. Job growth is flattening in New Castle County and may have troubles in the near future.

There was discussion of the changing rate of change in Kent County projections. Members noted that there seems to be a recent jump in population growth in Kent County., Ed explained that the data show a recent increase. The question, he added, is will that growth be sustained and, if so, for how long.

There was also general discussion of the relationship between where the growth is occurring in New Castle County and where there are problems with transportation infrastructure.

The control totals are still considered to be “draft.” Ed is asking members to review the data and get back to him with any comments or concerns over the next month.

Ed noted that he is still struggling with racial distribution in the projections. This has been complicated by the change in the way the US Census counts racial characteristics.

There was general discussion of approaches to age distribution and to projections of jobs and the labor force. The employment portions of the work are complicated by a variety of problems with federal employment estimates.

Certificate of Occupancy Discussion

There was a discussion of the contents of certificates of occupancy (CO) from several county and local governments.

Kelly Crumpley presented an example of a Kent County CO. He said it shouldn’t be too difficult to tie the data from Kent COs to a modified grid and to generate a quarterly report. He added that a potential stumbling block is the idea that there might be more staff work required. He said he hopes to set things up to automate the process and add a modified grid to the database “painlessly.”

Derrick Lightfoot presented a City of Wilmington CO. It was detailed, but still has some room for improvement, according to Derrick. He proposes it as a basis for a uniform, statewide CO standard.

There was a suggestion that a “test run” be performed to see what data is generated. Ed warned that it would be better to examine what sort of data the various local systems are capable of creating before a full test run. He suggested a sample of 30 to 40 COs from each local government for a group discussion.

Rick Kautz showed an example of a Sussex County CO. He said there is not much information on the paper CO, but that there is more data in assessment files that that it should be possible to create a report, with some staff work.

He cautioned, though, that he is still worried about whether the number of units in multi-family COs will be a dependable data source.

It was generally agreed that the several units of government will collect a sample of CO data to show the variation of data that is available.

A meeting date of August 30, at 10 a.m., in Dover, has been selected to review those sample data. A meeting or two in September will be called to complete the Projections.

Derrick Lightfoot moved for adjournment. Rick Kautz seconded the motion and the motion carried, unanimously.